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of the testicles, until the day when a eunuch managed, no one knows how, to take advantage of some of the women he was supposed to be guarding. From then on it was deemed necessary to remove the penis completely, and a copper cartridge was inserted for purposes of urination.

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As soon as the person fainted after undergoing the operation, a drink was concocted whose ingredients are unknown. When he revived, he was so thirsty that he downed the drink in a single gulp. It is said that the drug stupefied the eunuch to such a degree that he would be incapable of taking vengeance even if he had any weapons at hand.

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It was only after he had completely recovered that the victim was sent to the Mogho Naba. The latter assigned him the duty of guarding a harem or a royal tomb.

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him to his house, seats him by his side, and announces to the populace that he has just been visited by his son (Koubri Naba is a descendant of the Mogho Naba).

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He then offers the crown prince a cow and a great deal of [103] beer, and then, before he leaves, the Djiba Naba has free access to the chief's household where he takes as a wife the first nubile girl he encounters. The stay at Koubri traditionally lasted for seven days, but it could be shortened to two or three in view of the great expense involved in entertaining a prince of such high rank, especially at the present time when the canton chiefs no longer enjoy their former prestige.

The Djiba Naba continues on his way to Kombissiri where he is the guest of the canton chief. For a week, in addition to his food which must, of course, be copious and abundant quantities of beer, the crown prince also receives a cow, a sheep, and, before his departure for Doulougou, a wife.

[i.e. canton chief — Analyst]

304 Wanzouri; and so on through Nodo, Koulwandé, Wemba, etc.
551 There is even the favorite who is called Ponsom because he is given special privileges.

Zouinsi yuiya (names of the guards of the kéogo and of those
304 who watch over the bankoensé). Seven days after the ceremony some of the zouinsi are chosen to supervise the kéogo, to take care of its organization and to arrange the games. A real hierarchy is involved, beginning with the Soré Naba ("chief of the path"), who is, so to speak, the head of the establishment, and proceeding down in order of [266] precedence through Sobila Naba, Dag'noré, and Dag'Nobila (gatekeepers). The role of the latter is to allow any zounga [singular of zouinsi] to re-enter the enclosure while preventing any of the circumcised boys from leaving the enclosure without their permission. The Galli and Gallibila are in charge of the drums. The Imam and the Imambilla ("chiefs of pardon") protect the bankoensé from ill-treatment by the zouinsi. Then there is Banzambo, a comic character who is always performing all sorts of dances to relieve the monotony of life in the kéogo and give the boys a little fun. His gyrations always amuse the company. The duty of two characters called Wagdré, "chief thief," and Wagd'billa, "little thief," is to steal the meat acquired by the newly circumcised boys during forays or the saghbo brought by the boys' parents. They compensate for their mischief, however, by putting the younger children to bed and feeding them when the games go on too long. They do this in spite of the vigilance of the guards.

The Nané and Nanebilla, along with the Bankoé, are the masters of ceremonies.

Support of the circumcised boys. As we have already pointed out, the relatives of the boys are expected to provide them with morning and evening meals during their recovery. Actually, the boys get very meager rations since more than half of the food -- after the choicest bits have been set aside by the lembré (person in charge of tasting the food)-- is reserved [267] for the many zouinsi. Since most of them are bachelors, they welcome a chance to eat their fill.

304 Care given the sick boys. A specially arranged corner of the
752 kéogo serves as an infirmary. Treatment consists of washing the

304 wound with warm water which often is not scrupulously clean
752 since the gourd in which it is kept is not always washed. The
[278] wound is dusted with a charred substance (made by burning the bark or leaves of the baguem-baga plant) mixed with karite butter. It is bandaged with a leaf from the kantonga bush, tied on with a bit of thread. Once the wound has begun to heal, it is wrapped in cotton strips. The water used to wash the wound is thrown into a hole that is covered with a stone.

304 198 Special language of the kéogo. In order to prevent the Moaga (here meaning an uncircumcised person) from understanding what is said within the kéogo or between the boys and the guards, a special language has been developed. Some of its words are as follows:

Water (kom in ordinary Mossi language), hargo;
Millet cake (saghbo in Mossi), lâbo;
Sauce (zindo in Mossi), kirou;
Fire (bougoum in Mossi), nionom;
Beer (dam in Mossi), sonnom;
A robe or blanket (fougou in Mossi), pilli;
Mat (pinri in Mossi), wanghé. [268]

304 292 Distinctive attire of the circumcised boys (bankoanga). His costume, wallimba or zougba, consists of a fringed loincloth with pockets. He carries a rough stick (zâbré) with which he hunts rabbits and other small game.

304 293 He accompanies his evening dance with an instrument called wassimba, a curved stick on the end of which are strung four or five pieces of gourd, roughly circular in shape, with holes bored through them.

304 534 535 Tom-toms. The bankoensé (newly circumcised boys) dance to the beat of two drums like those used in the warba and waongo (see the chapter on native dances). The drums are called gangango when they accompany other dances, but here they are called gallyans.

304 Prohibitions in the kéogo. A Moaga (1) is strictly forbidden

1. "Moaga" is used here in a pejorative sense and means an uncircumcised man.

224 Mossi as to us the king of beasts, the master of the bush (wé'naba), and they attack it only if it has killed a man.

224 These hunters make their own powder with ground charcoal and
389 saltpeter extracted from earth soaked with urine. This earth is washed carefully, and a residue of saltpeter crystals is left when the liquid evaporates. Usually no sulphur is added because it is too costly. This powder burns well, and when made carefully it is quite effective. The hunters keep it in small gourds or ram horns; they only make a little at a time. Hard pebbles are used as bullets.

224 The natives know how to disguise themselves skillfully, and they only shoot at very close range when the animal is not moving. They often lie in wait for hours on end, sometimes for the whole night. They know the habits of the animals and the water holes where they come to drink, and they build small huts with branches or dig holes where they hid under foliage. Others more ingeniously build a vast funnel-shaped trap, its open base sometimes one or even two kilometers long; the sides of equal length consist of thorn fences, and the tip of the funnel, which is located near a thick tree, leaves barely enough space for the animal to pass through. The hunter takes his position up in the tree with bow and arrows and settles comfortably because he may have to wait a long time. Unsuspecting animals follow the thorn fence and come to the tree where they are killed. The hunters manage to fell some handsome game in this fashion, even elephants, in spite of their very primitive weapons.

/50/ Professional hunters, those who always have adventures to relate and who say like those of Tarascon that they never miss a shot, such true hunters are rare, but those who hunt as a pastime are as numerous as the Mossi themselves. A Mossi never goes out without
[411] a stick. When asked why he does so, he answers that it is to kill
● 752 snakes, which — alas! — take so many victims, and to drive off dogs; and then, "I might find a hare or some other animal in the bush, and
[231] what would I kill it with if I didn't have a stick?" Many of them have dogs which are truly not very ferocious, but they are poorly fed and preserve all their agility. A Mossi on his way to the fields or walking from one village to another always keeps his ears and eyes open; he is on the lookout for meat! Since he does not have many ideas, he is seldom absorbed in his thoughts or absent-minded.

The season we are now studying is the time of large-scale hunting. Several villages get together and set a date and a meeting place.
1 [i.e. February-April. - Analyst]

753 /66/ This is because illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit,
761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his
[763] illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When an elder is about to die, those who have caused him offense come to beg his forgiveness and only find peace when they have obtained it, for the old man might return to obtain his revenge. Sudden death is usually ascribed to poison and, alas, this is often the case. Sometimes it is also attributed to an evil spirit, especially in case of accident, fall, snake bite, etc.

755 The instinct of self-preservation is so strong in man that the Mossi
757 although they ascribe a superhuman origin to illness, nevertheless fight it. It is true that all their treatments combine medicinal and superstitious elements to drive off evil spirits, and whatever the remedy, true medicine or amulet, it is always a tim; there is only the one
759 word to designate it. Some of the natives know how to treat certain illnesses, and people come to consult them, often from far away. One has a medicine against snakes, and he makes it in complete secrecy on a certain day; one knows how to treat colds and bronchitis;
[752] another, dysentery; yet another, sores. The bone-setters are often very skillful, and with the mere pressure of their fingers they can set a dislocated joint or a broken leg; then they enclose it between tightly-bound millet stalks as a splint. These doctors prescribe remedies without resorting to sacrifices or witchcraft. Sometimes they live with their patient to care for him, of course for a fee, especially if the person gets well.

751 Smallpox vaccination is performed, but often too late, on individuals who already have the germ. The vaccine is taken from a seriously ill person without any precautionary antiseptic measures. The vaccinated individual is usually made very sick and sometimes dies of

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you
● 752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of
755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex;
801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The
769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on
796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

789 791 A number of grigris made by Mossi timisoba have passed through my hands. I shall list them and briefly describe them below.

1. A cow's tail at the tip of a wooden handle. When one is traveling during the winter season and a storm threatens, one need only wave the cow's tail and the storm does not burst. Once in the village, one stops waving it and the rain comes.

[757] 2. A hollow koba horn in which tamarind leaves, peanuts, and gum have been placed. In case of headache one opens the horn by its small upper lid, takes /592/ a pinch of the mixture, and swallows it. Then one does this again and also rubs a little on the forehead.

3. A small hoe with a chicken's head fastened to the handle. When during a dance one wishes to silence a singer who has been singing too long in order to sing oneself, one grips the hoe and covers the chicken's mouth. The singer is silenced, and in addition one sings perfectly.

[752] 4. A small hoe covered with leopardskin at the bend. If one is bitten by a snake, one cuts off a very small piece of the skin and puts it in a canari full of water. Then one rubs the bite with this water.

5. A deer horn with a fine red cord wrapped around it. Inside the horn there are tiégélara and karité seeds. The opening of the horn is closed with a wad of cotton.

If an enemy comes looking for a fight, one places some of the contents of the horn on a leather bracelet which is slipped on the left wrist. No harm can come to you, and the quarrel will immediately come to an end.

6. A deer horn containing crushed scorpions and pimento. If one wishes to become an indefatigable dancer, one need only rub one's back with the mixture.

7. Leather bracelets with powdered rice inside. People who wear one of those bracelets on the arm can be sure that the stick or sword which their enemy may attempt to use against them will break in his hands.

8. Iron bracelets covered with crocodile skin. Same purpose.

[842] 9. Cotton bracelets with honey and salt inside. If your wife is sterile, it is sufficient to put the bracelet in water in order to make her fertile.

789 791 777 10. A deer horn covered with leather and containing millet and pounded-bean flour. On the outside there is a hooked piece of iron.

304 881 notified, nor are the family heads. The women, girls, and other boys (those who are not to be circumcised) cannot witness the operation, and this is actually forbidden to them. Circumcision is performed in the bush, 500 meters from the village, in the open air by the side of a tree. There is no location determined by custom, however, and a spot is chosen each year at will.

The man who is performing the operation ties the tip of the patient's prepuce with a string /259/, and the boy squats down. A small block of wood is placed under the penis, and the tip of the penis rests upon it. The man places a small iron cleaver on the spot marked by the string, and deals it a sharp, neat blow with a stone, so the blade will make a clean cut. Naturally, a copious hemorrhage ensues. It is [752] first allowed to take its course for a while, and then the man stanches it by putting dust upon the wound. Each child is circumcised in turn. When the operations are over, the man who was chosen, the nané, leads the circumcised boys to another spot, 500 meters from the village, under a tree. He has the heads of the children's families notified (and they notify in turn the children's parents) that the boys have just been circumcised and beg forgiveness for having done this without telling them. Family heads, fathers, and mothers naturally forgive in accordance with custom. Meanwhile, the boys are taking care of themselves. By tying a string around the body, they lift the penis so its tip will not rub against the thighs. The string holds another cord which lifts the penis in a horizontal position. To maintain it in this position, they also place under the penis a little piece of forked wood, the tip of which rests on the testicles. They do not dress the wounds as yet. This will not be done until three days have passed.

304 342 881 Meanwhile, the men of the circumcised boys' compounds build two sheds in Mossi style (low, on forks, with a thick straw roof), one outside the village where the young men are, the other inside the village in front of the compound of the nané. Food for the circumcised boys is provided by their families. Each mother makes sarabou for her son, but the mothers do not bring it themselves, for, being women, they are not permitted to see the newly-circumcised boys. They send the sarabou through some boy who has already been circumcised. In the evening when it is quite dark, around seven o'clock, the nané brings the children to sleep under the shed erected in the village. Before daybreak in the morning they will, like shadows, leave again for the bush.

304 824 752 881 At the end of three days, the nané sends a few circumcised boys of preceding years, rasamba, to look in the bush for bark of the néré, karite, n'pékou, and the n'kouna trees. He has them boiled in a large canari and then allows the water to cool until it is lukewarm. Then he calls the bankonsé (this is the name of the newly circumcised boys in Mossi, bankonka in the singular, bankonsé in the plural) and orders them to wash their penes in this water. At the same time he has the leaves of the kantoboga boiled. This is an aloe-type plant of which we have already spoken /not translated/. When this washing is done, the bankonsé smear their penes with cow butter (karite butter is avoided because it is believed to soften the penis and to make it less virile), and then, after cutting kantoboga leaves into pieces, they wrap them around the member, forming a sort of sheath. These leaves are wrapped with cotton thread so they will stay in place. /260/

From then on, the same procedure is repeated every morning and every evening. The bankonsé undo the bandage, wash with néré or karite water, apply fresh butter and new kantoboga leaves. This is done until the wounds are healed.

Néré water, once prepared, keeps for seven days. The supply of kantoboga leaves is renewed only when there are no more on hand.

304 883 881 The bankonsé do not stir for the first three days. From the third to the tenth day, they begin to take a little exercise. For example, they fetch whatever water they need. At the end of ten days, they walk about in the bush, fetch firewood which they stack in piles, and do the same with straw. In the open country they chase hares, rats, and snakes with sticks, in short, all the small game which is to be found there. When there is water in the vicinity, they fish for frogs and fish. They also pick berries from bushes, etc.

[292] Their clothing consists of a kind of skirt which goes down to their ankles and which is made of old garments torn to shreds, of frayed cotton bands.

In the evening from time to time the bankonsé have tom-tom sessions near the shed where they sleep in the village. The griot /drummers, minstrels/ come and play on their instruments. Since this is done at night, men, women, and children may attend.

304 425 881 The bankonsé are entitled to ransack the bush and to take everything they find: chickens, goats, sheep, cotton, etc. The owners have no right to object, but this applies only to small livestock. The bankonsé have no right to larger animals and horses.

11; Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere